



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts & Heritage Cabinet

Janet Northern Creates Baskets from Honeysuckle and Willow Bark at Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

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BEREA, Ky. – On Saturday, Sept. 22, Janet Northern, of Mount Vernon, will create baskets using honeysuckle vines and willow bark from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea.

Northern has been making baskets for 15 years and is primarily self-taught. She utilizes the wood and natural vines that she finds and gathers in the region surrounding her Rockcastle County farm to create her baskets. The eastern Kentucky woodlands give Northern inspiration as well as material from which to work.

Preparation of the honeysuckle vines involves boiling them for 30 minutes then stripping off the outer bark to reveal the honey-colored, pliable surface of the vine. When the vines are freshly cut they are pliable, but over time they dry out and need to be soaked in water to soften them. Northern's smaller baskets are often made with reed and driftwood.

Starting with an interesting piece of wood, Northern begins to design her asymmetrical one-of-a-kind baskets, often creating multiple openings. She soaks the honeysuckle vines in water, attaches them to the piece of wood chosen, and begins to weave her beautiful asymmetrical shapes.

Northern also creates baskets from the inner bark of willow trees. These are usually started with a crisscross pattern and a square bottom. She cuts and tapers the willow bark into varying widths, depending on the size and function of each basket. The bark is kept supple by soaking it in water before weaving.

A selection of works by Northern is regularly found at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open winter hours daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. with the cafe is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

The center currently features works by more than 650 artisans from 100 counties across the Commonwealth and a special exhibit, "The Threads that Bind: Textiles by Kentucky Artisans," on display Sept. 1, 2012, through Feb. 23, 2013. For information call 859-985-5448 or visit the center's website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

The Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



Janet Northern makes baskets from honeysuckle vines at the Kentucky Artisan Center